

Hydrologic conditions, a brief weather forecast, and Climate websites

A few showers are sweeping through today, with between a tenth and a third of an inch having fallen in the Feather River basin, and Northern Sierra; and a couple of tenths in the Sacramento area. Additional precipitation is possible tonight, with the snow level down to 4,000' to 5,000'. Monthly April totals are quite likely to come up shy of the 3.9" norm for the 8 Station index. For the season, it stands at 31.3"; 73% of average for this time of year, or 63% of a full water year total of 50.0". Those numbers do not take into account the current round of rain, so look for a slight bump over the next week.

Winds accompanying and behind this front will cause gusty winds. In Southeastern California, there are Red Flag Warnings posted. At an interagency emergency preparedness meeting today, the National Weather Service indicated there may be an early fire season declaration this year, pointing to the very dry conditions, and the record-low rainfall in Southern California.

Only minor rises are expected on state rivers, generally along the North Coast. All stages are forecast to remain below Monitor level at this time.

Warmer than average temperatures have contributed to the decline in snowpack, which this year peaked at the end of the first week of March, rather than near April 1. The April 1 low snowpack measurement is in the ballpark of 1988 and 1990; with latest course measurements at about 40% of average. Today's snow sensor measurements put the water content at 31% for the Northern Sierra, 34% for the Central Sierra, and 24% for the Southern Sierra.

Water Year Type projections are as follows; for the Sacramento Valley, 'Dry,' and for the San Joaquin Valley 'Critical.' The most recent 'critical' designation for the San Joaquin was in 1994. The values used in calculating water year type incorporate April-July snowmelt runoff estimates, current Oct-Mar flow, and a weighted value given to last year's water year value. Unimpaired runoff through March 31st, in the Sacramento river region was about 6.6 million acre feet. On the San Joaquin 4 rivers, it was just under 1 million acre feet. (Statewide average flow was 60% of average). April-July runoff forecasts for the State's water supply basins range from 67% (Shasta Lake inflow) to 31% (Tule River).

Reservoirs are in fine shape, with Shasta at 104% of average for time of year as of April 10th; Oroville at 110%; Folsom 107%; New Melones 132%; Don Pedro 111%, and San Luis

at 92%. Carryover is helping bolster water storage, in spite of the low precip and snowpack numbers.

Numerical weather prediction models bring another system across the state on Friday night through Saturday evening. Another half inch is possible in far Northern California, with several inches of snow in the Sierra, and probably more gusty conditions for the mountains and SoCal.

There is much news and talk of climate change, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 4th assessment coming out.

Here is their website:

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Another site of interest may be the California Climate Change Portal, which is the site for the state's Climate Action Team:

<http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/index.html>

The DWR climate group has this page, with additional surfing material from the 'links' link;

<http://baydeltaoffice.water.ca.gov/climatechange.cfm>

as well as a look at climate change in regards to the California Water Plan at:

<http://www.waterplan.water.ca.gov/climate/index.cfm>

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